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ACCRA FOR GEOFFREY HUNT
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LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA ACTION OFFICERS
EUCOM FOR J5-A AFRICA DIVISION AND POLAD YATES

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SUBJECT: EMBASSY, CARPE PROMOTE ENVIRONMENT TO CAMEROONIAN
STUDENTS

¶1. (U) DCM, together with CARPE Director John Flynn and Yaounde CARPE representative Antoine Eyebe, at a June 28 Embassy-hosted event, presented certificates and prizes to three Cameroonian students who had participated in a World Environment Day event organized by CARPE.

¶2. (U) Twenty students from the Government Bilingual High School of Yaounde participated in a field trip to learn about agroforestry techniques in nearby farming areas in an event organized by CARPE (the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment) and ICRAF (the World Agroforestry Center) to mark World Environment Day. Three of the students who excelled in a quiz competition after the event were awarded certificates and cash prizes at the Embassy. DCM Nelson noted that the USG and the government of Cameroon (GRC) work closely together on numerous environmental efforts, with CARPE as one of the USG's most important partners. He praised the students, and their teachers and school administrators, for their commitment to the cause of environmental protection.

¶3. (U) In his remarks, Flynn -- who was in Yaounde to attend a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) meeting with local CARPE representatives -- noted that the environmental work being done in Cameroon by CARPE and the WWF is both significant and innovative, and stands as a model for other countries. CARPE, a dynamic program in its fifth year of funding, works in 12 different high-biodiversity landscapes in Central Africa that cover some 80 million hectares -- an area 25% larger than Texas. It has developed management systems for national parks, preserves, protected areas, and logging concessions that include "some of the wildest reserves in the world," according to Flynn.

¶4. (SBU) Flynn praised the Global Forest Watch, a pilot program developed with Cameroon's Ministry of Forestry and Fauna (MINFOF) to monitor legal and illegal logging using satellite technology and NASA imagery. The program is an effort, he said, to get governments to "take care of their forests" (though it has been the unfortunate subject of "conspiracy theories" that the U.S. is trying to exploit African resources). Another USAID program works with IUCN (an environmental NGO) to develop networks among parliamentarians. National representatives work on policy, regulation and legislative reform, and on creating advocacy programs through civil society. A small-grants program has been set up to help create a "constituency for conservation," serving public diplomacy by making U.S. efforts more visible to the public. The Congo Basin Forest Partnership is another

program that has "attracted enormous attention," Flynn said, and Central Africa is now "leading the world in forest management" in setting up a certification system for timber. Governments and environmentalists in South America and the Far East are taking notice, he said, of creative ideas coming from Central Africa.

¶5. (SBU) The WWF, according to Flynn, has been a leading innovator, engaging local communities as "allies in conservation," and in developing progressive programs for safari hunting that include revenue sharing with local residents. It also works positively with logging companies to promote sustainable management of the forests. He cautioned, however, that some local engagement has been "more destructive than good," with local chiefs selling their leases and pocketing the money, while outside companies do the logging. (Note: In a meeting with the DCM in December 2006, Dr. James Leape, Director General of the WWF, said the Congo Basin is a global priority for WWF, calling it "the next frontier for conservation"; the other priorities are the Amazon and fisheries. Cameroon, he said, is one of the strongest programs, and the USG is the WWF's most important partner; a USAID grant to WWF constitutes 40% of their program. End note.)

¶6. (SBU) Flynn also remarked that recent Chinese exploitation of African resources presents one of the biggest contemporary challenges to the environmental community, building railroads and ports and pouring in "massive" numbers of workers to environmentally sensitive areas.

MARQUARDT